

Najib unfit as PM over RM2.6 billion 'donation', says Ling in defence over suit

Malaysian Insider

Dec 14, 2015

By Jennifer Gomez

Datuk Seri Najib Razak is unfit to be the prime minister of Malaysia due to "wrongful conduct" in receiving RM2.6 billion into his personal bank accounts, Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik said in his defence to a suit against him by the Umno president.

The former MCA president, who is being sued by Najib for remarks about the political donation, said that the Umno president failed to disclose the identity of the donor, the source of the funds nor how it was utilised.

Dr Ling also said that Najib had admitted to receiving the RM2.6 billion as a donation on December 8 this year and had not channeled the money to Umno's accounts.

"The [plaintiff explained](#) that it was the donor's wish that the donation be made to the plaintiff personally and as such, the donation was deposited into the plaintiff's personal account.

"This is contrary to the plaintiff's earlier statement which expresses that all political funding must be channeled to the political party's account and be accompanied by an acknowledgement of receipt, in the interests of preventing corruption," Ling said.

He filed his defence today through law firm Messrs Ranjit Singh and Yeoh.

The former transport minister also pleaded that the behaviour and acts performed by the plaintiff are matters of public importance and interest which must be subject to public discussions as well as open to robust criticism and scrutiny.

He said the transfer of funds, most of which took place in March 2013 before the general election that year, created a public perception that the prime minister was not honest or was involved in money politics to buy the elections.

Dr Ling also said that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and various past and present leaders who have been critical of Najib and made statements which tarnished his reputation were not sued for defamation, adding that the prime minister had also not brought any action against the Wall Street Journal and Sarawak Report for exposing the channeling of funds.

Ling also pleaded the defence of fair comment and qualified privilege.

[WSJ reported in July](#) that US\$700 million (RM2.6 billion as per the conversion rate at the time) was transferred into his personal bank accounts – the largest portion of which was deposited about two months before the 2013 general election.

In October, Ling was reported to have agreed with his former boss, Dr Mahathir, that Najib had “taken the people’s money and put it in his own personal accounts”.

“I agree with Mahathir. Because he (Najib) has taken people’s money and put it in his own personal accounts,” [Ling was quoted as saying](#) at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur.

Following the remarks, law firm Hafarizam Wan & Aisha Mubarak issued a [letter of demand](#) on behalf of Najib to Ling at his residence.

The letter dated October 5 demanded an unreserved apology and compensation within seven days, failing which legal action would be instituted.

But Ling’s lawyers said their client [stood by his statement](#). – December 14, 2015.

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